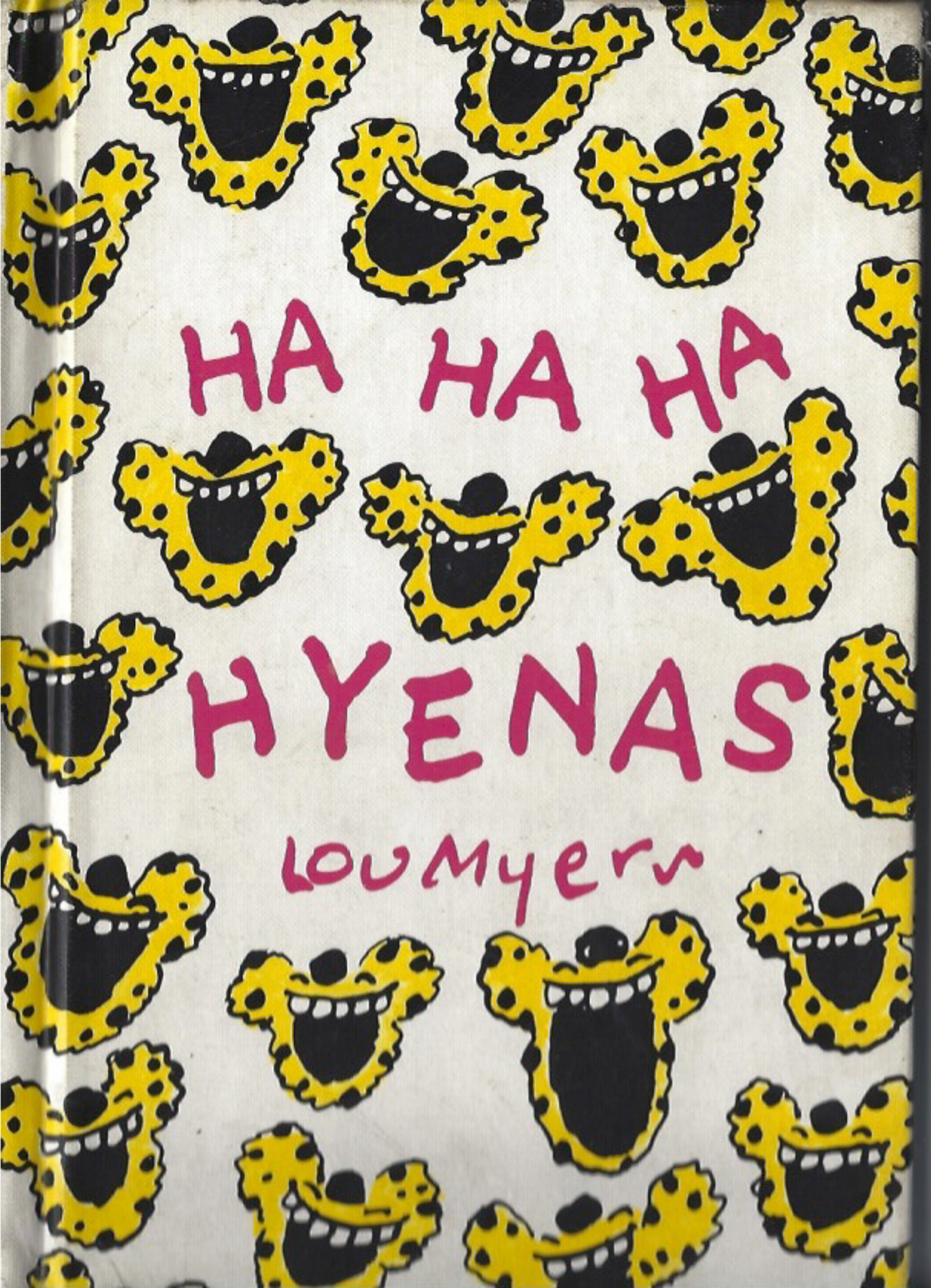

HA HA HA
HYENAS
Lou Myers

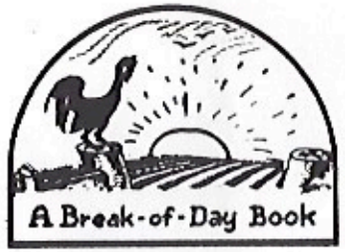
To Saul
who remembers when
Lou Myers

About the Book

The hyenas have a problem. They can't stop laughing. Every time they catch an animal for dinner they start to laugh and their dinner just runs away. So the hyenas have to eat oranges (ugh!) while they keep on trying to catch some protein.

But their real problems begin when Sally, the playful pink elephant, wanders into the story. Sally – from the hyenas' viewpoint – is the world's biggest pizza pie – that is, *if* they can catch her. But Sally is also the world's biggest, most bumbling nuisance, and the way she treats the hyenas leaves them with nothing to laugh about – and no pizza either.

Lou Myers' gleeful story and cartoons will give the reader almost as many laughs as there are in a bagful of laughing hyenas.



Ever since 1928, when Wanda Gág's *Millions of Cats* appeared ("a landmark of children's literature," says May Hill Arbuthnot, in *Children's Reading in the Home*, which "marked the beginning of a spectacular development of picture stories,") Coward, McCann & Geoghegan has been publishing books of high quality for young readers.

Now, a new group of easy-to-read stories, known as Break-of-Day Books, appears under the colophon shown above – a rooster crowing in the sunrise – taken from Wanda Gág's illustrations for *Tales from Grimm* and *More Tales from Grimm*.

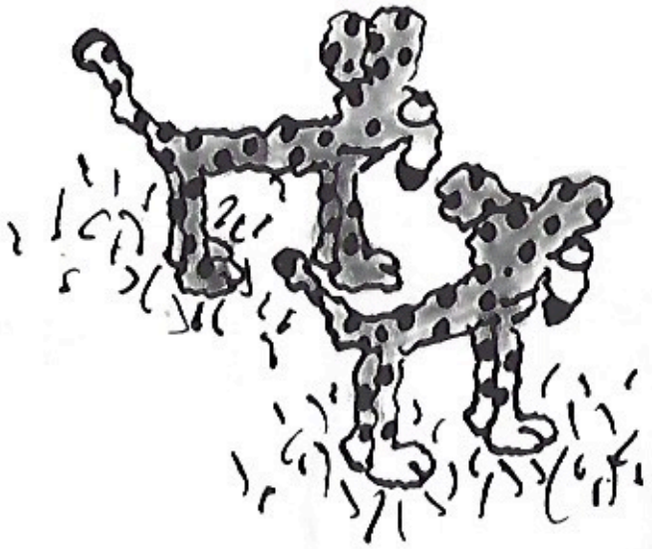
Though the language used in Break-of-Day Books is deliberately kept as clear and as simple as possible, the stories are *not* written in a controlled vocabulary. And while chosen to be within the grasp of readers in the primary grades, their content is far-ranging and varied enough to captivate children who have just begun crossing the momentous threshhold into the world of books.

HA HA HA HYENAS

Lou Myers

Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc.
New York

For
Mary and Reney
Gert and Al



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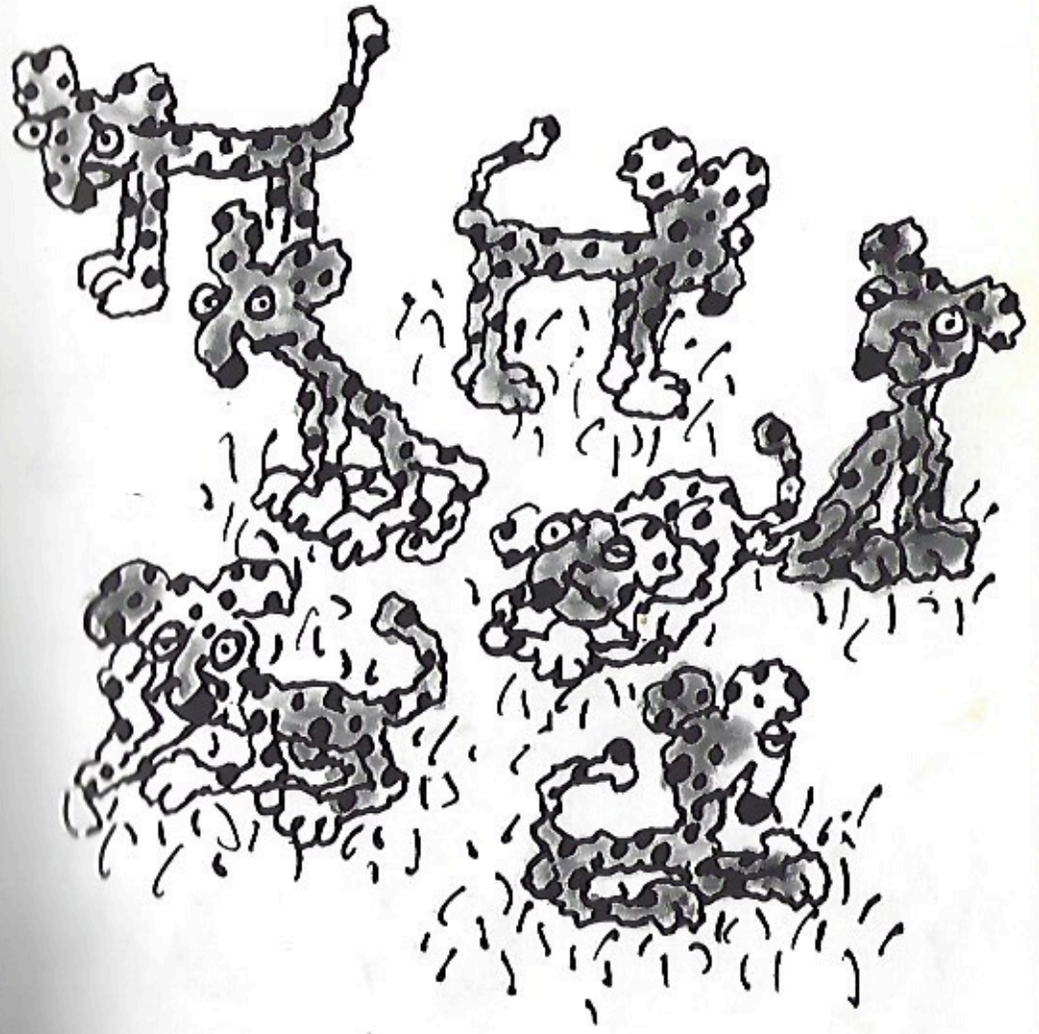
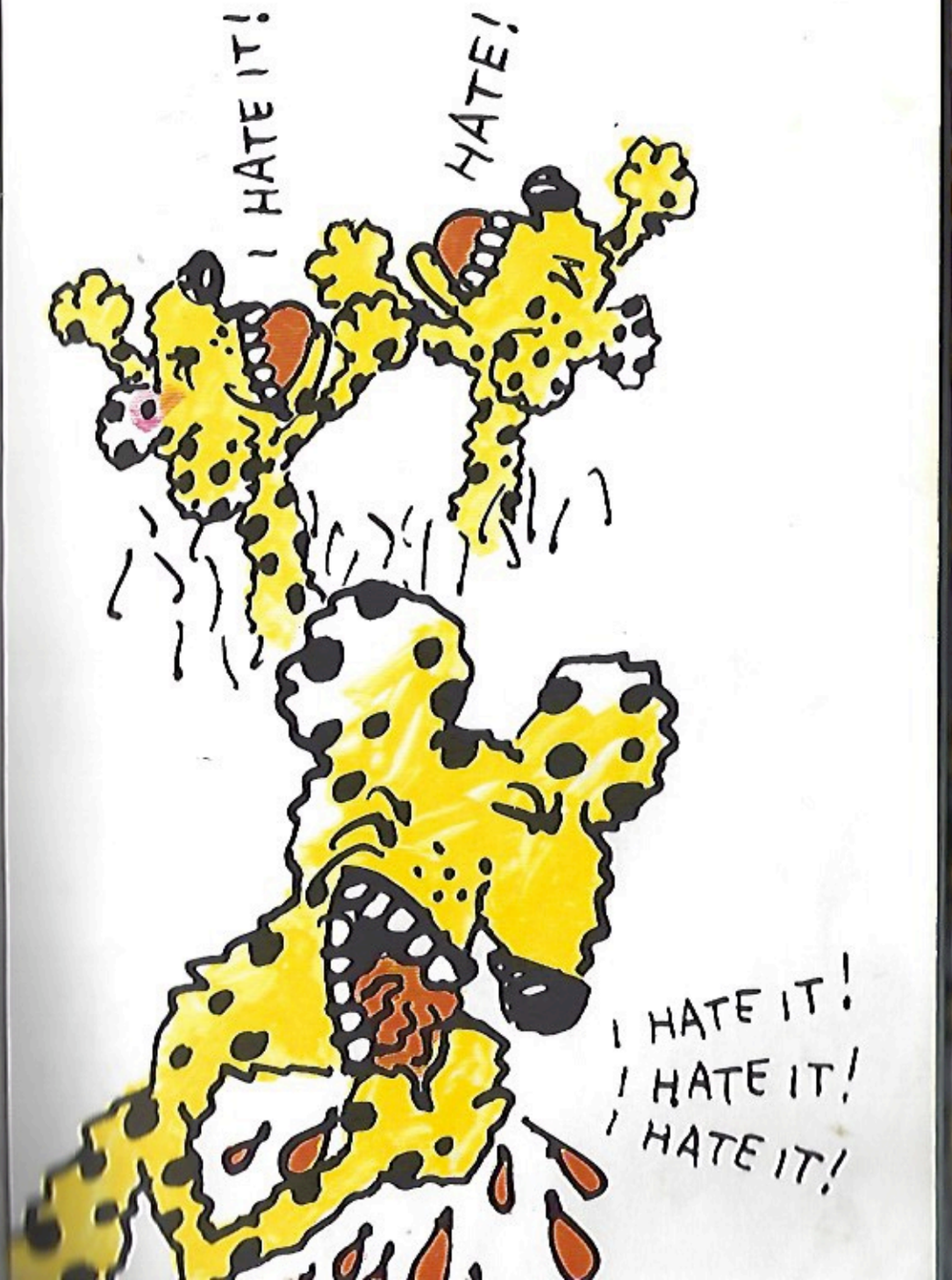
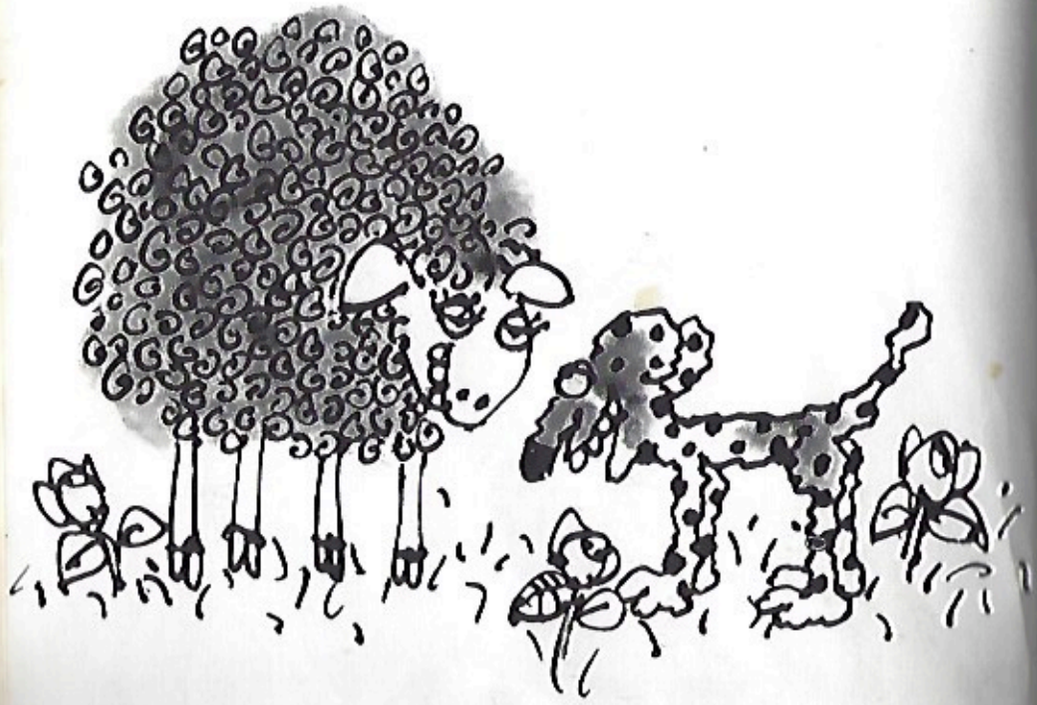
The laughing hyenas
had grown very slim.
Every time they were about to eat,
something would make them laugh.



Little things.
A word, even a sneeze
could set them off.
"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the hyenas.
And while they were laughing,
their meal would run away.
So the hyenas had to eat fruit.
Oranges, mostly,
because they were in season.

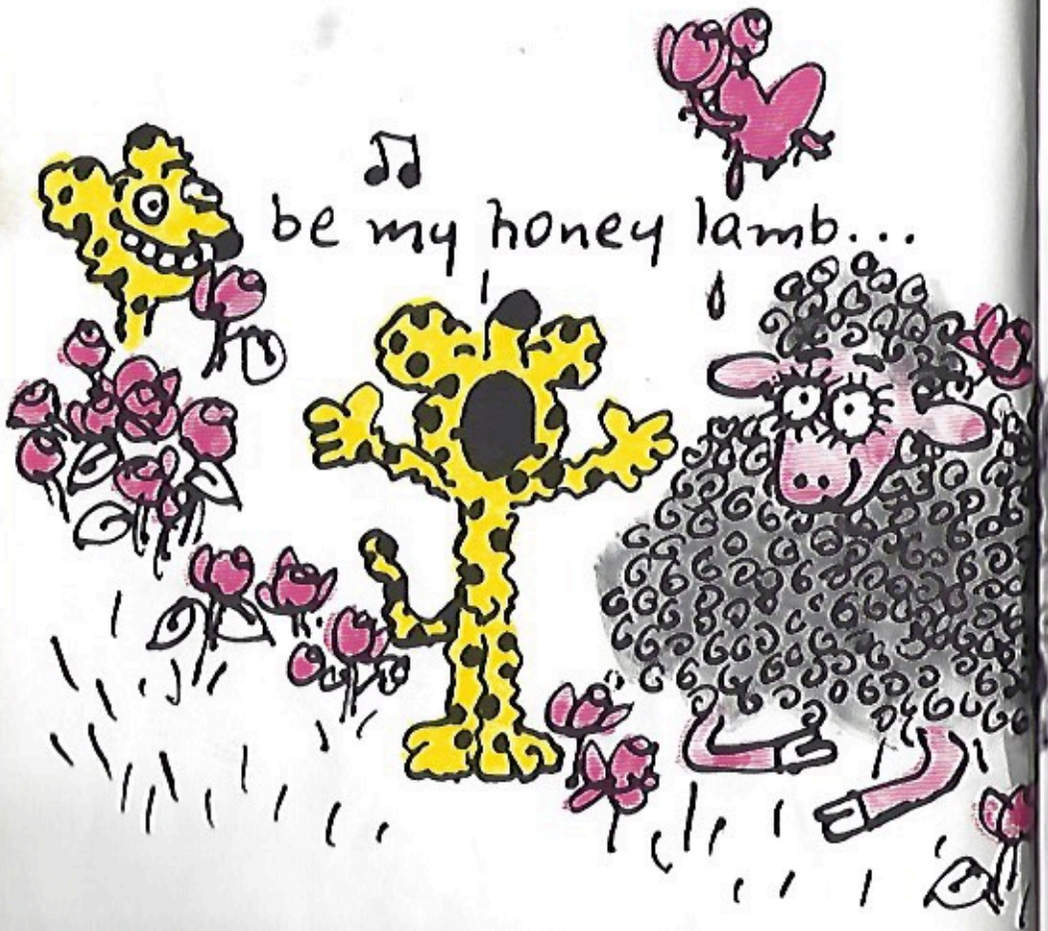


Just then they heard a twig snap.
"Hey, here come some lamb chops,"
said Smiley, the chief hyena.
A woolly sheep came by.
"Hello, Phyllis," said Smiley.
Phyllis opened
a pair of lovely eyes.
"How did you know my name?"
she asked.



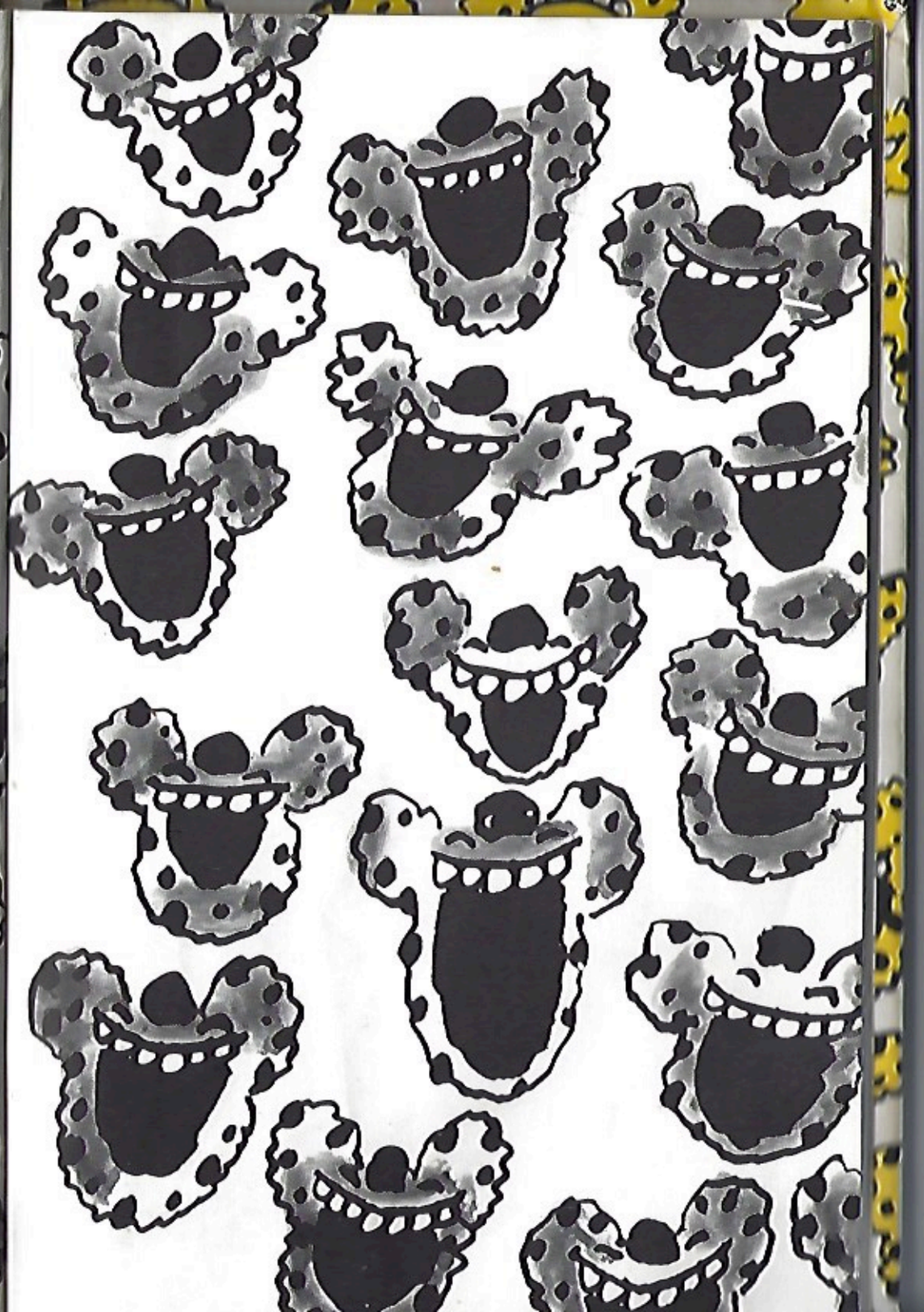
"I know all about you," said Smiley.
"I've wanted to meet you very much."
"Very much?" Phyllis was so pleased.
It was a pity. Smiley didn't
care for her at all.
He just wanted to eat her up.

"What's *your* name?" said Phyllis.
"Smiley," said Smiley,
winking at his friends.
Then he sang a song for her.

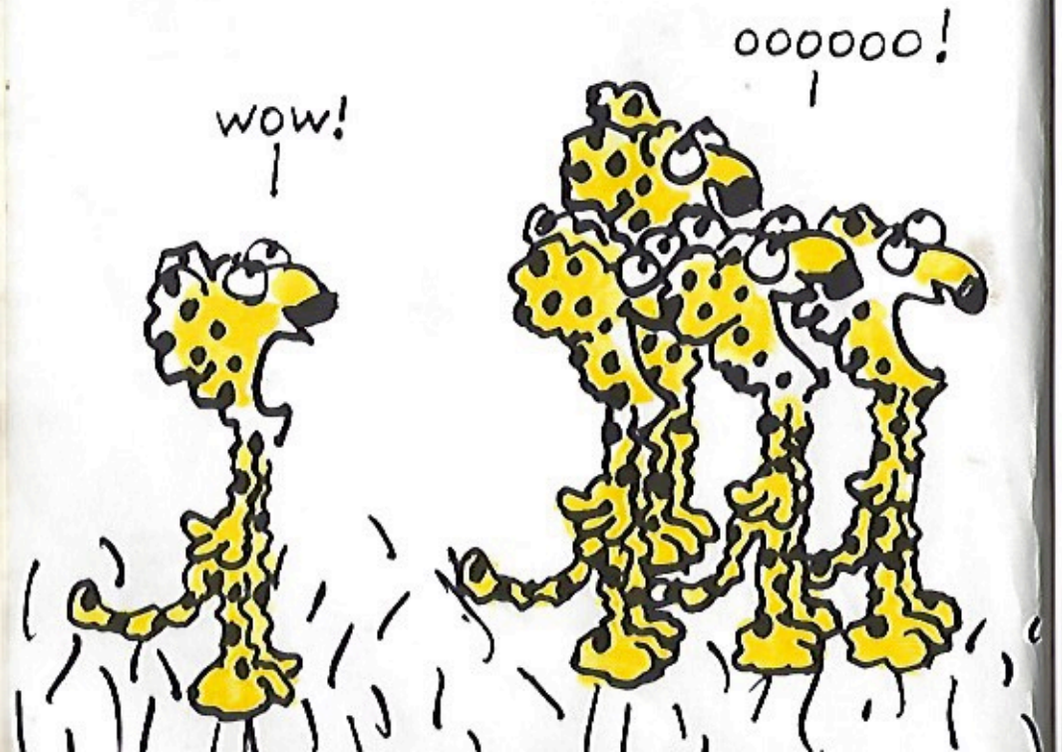


The other hyenas
couldn't stand it any longer.
They clapped their paws, and sang:
"Smiley's in love with a lamb!"
"Smiley's in love with a lamb!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the hyenas.
HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!
"I'll never pass this way again,"
said Phyllis. She left with
tears in her eyes.
She should have known
how lucky she was
to have escaped.
"Ha, ha, ha!" said Smiley.
"We've done it again.
There goes our supper!"



Just then a gnu
came walking through the jungle.
"What a fine yak you are!" said
Smiley. "Make a muscle."
"I'm not a yak," said the gnu.
"I'm a gnu. And my name is
Skidmore!"
"Skidmore!" they gasped.
The hyenas bit their lips
to keep from laughing out loud.



"You're so husky,
you must play football," said Smiley.
"If all of us got a grip on you,
do you think you could break it?"
"Easy as pie," said Skidmore.

HOW SHOULD WE EAT HIM?

I SAY HAMBURGER!

I SAY GNU-BURGER!

WHO-BURGER?

The hyenas flattened Skidmore in a second.

GNU-BURGER?

HE DIDN'T SAY GNU-BURGER.

WHO EVER HEARD OF GNU-BURGER?

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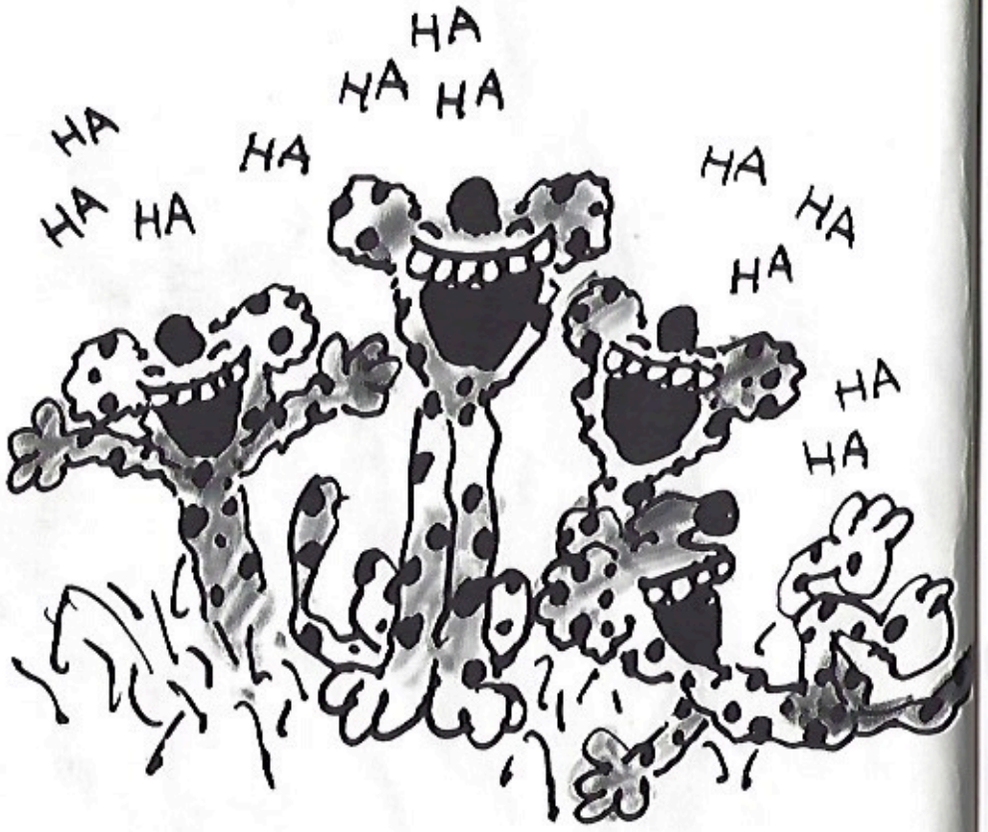
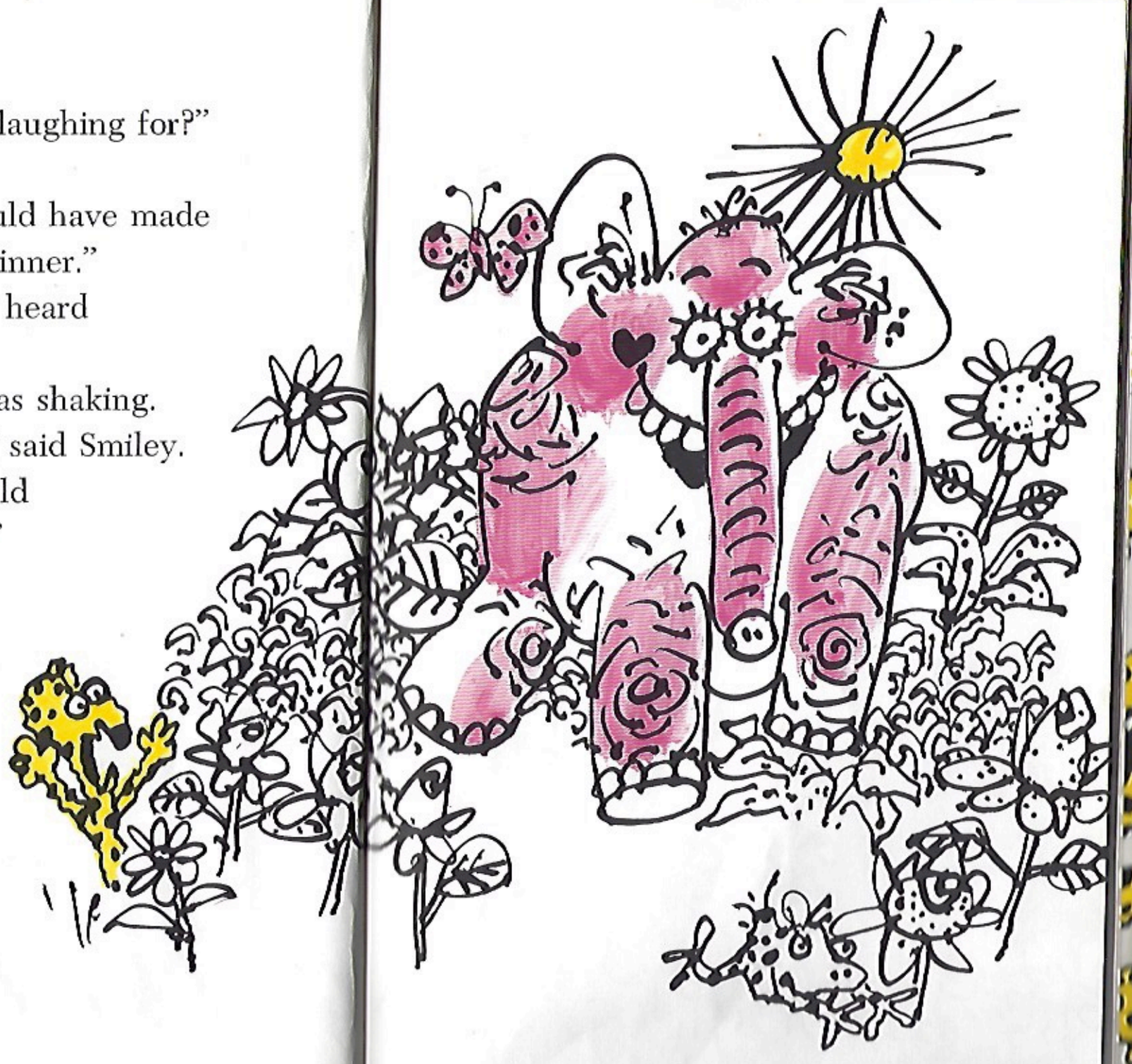
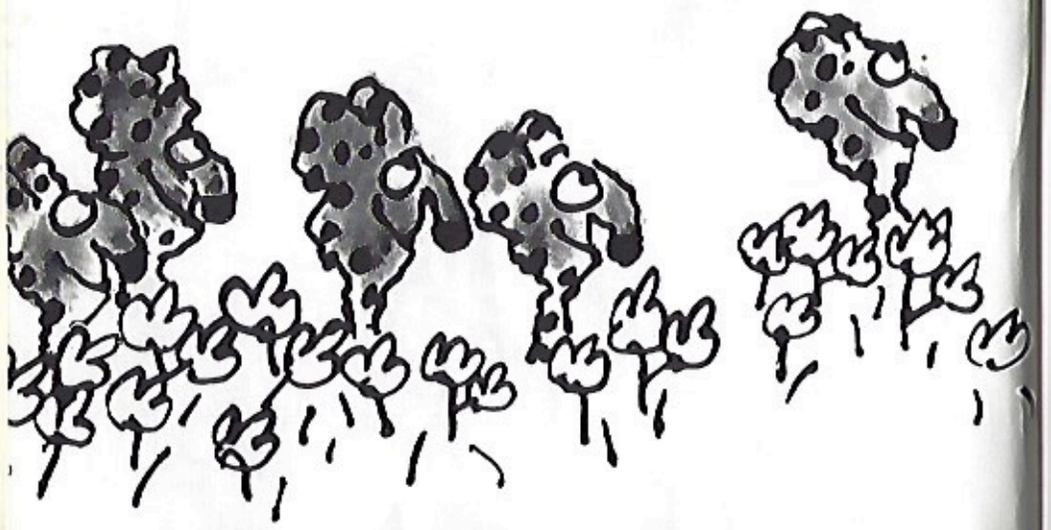
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
laughed the hyenas.
When they caught their breath,
Skidmore the gnu was gone.



"What are we laughing for?"
said Smiley.
"Skidmore would have made
a good steak dinner."
Just then they heard
heavy steps.
The ground was shaking.
"Guess what?" said Smiley.
"Here comes old
butterfly foot!"

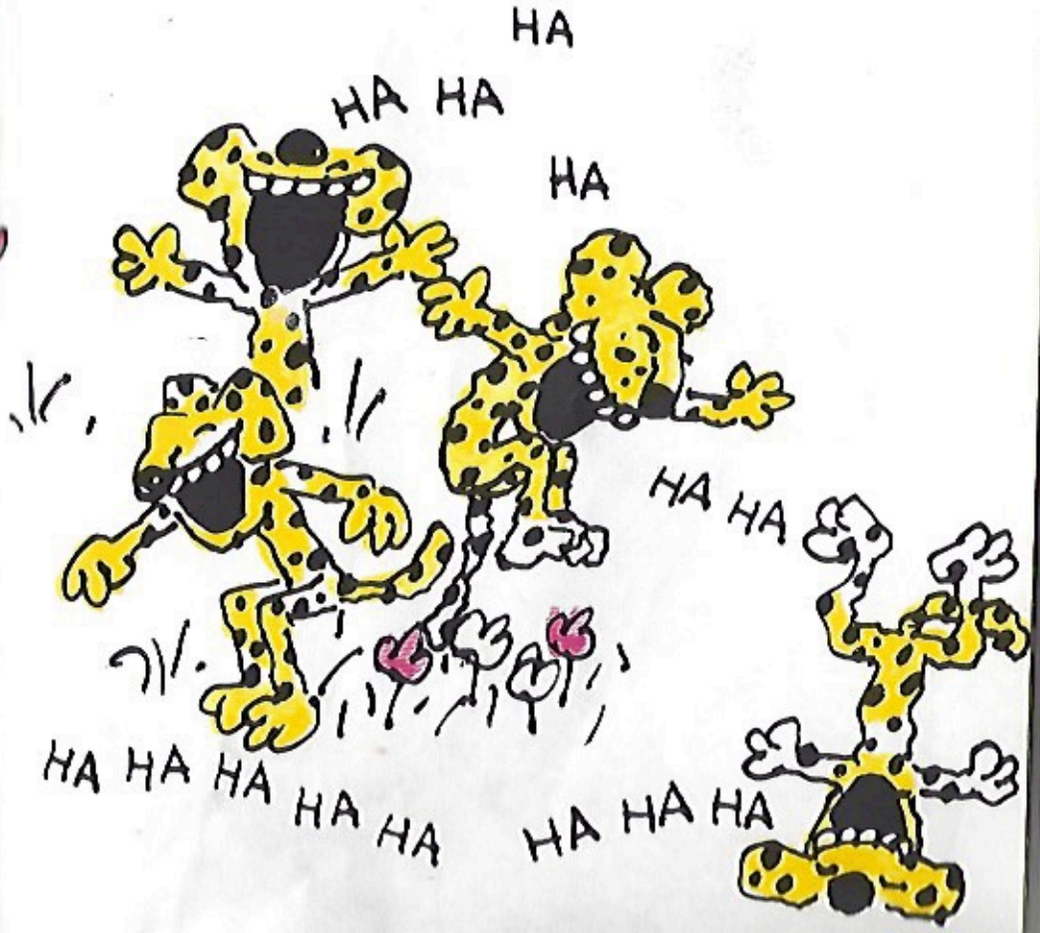


A huge elephant came
into the clearing.
"Hello, boys," she said.
"My name is Sally,
and I used to work
in a bowling alley."

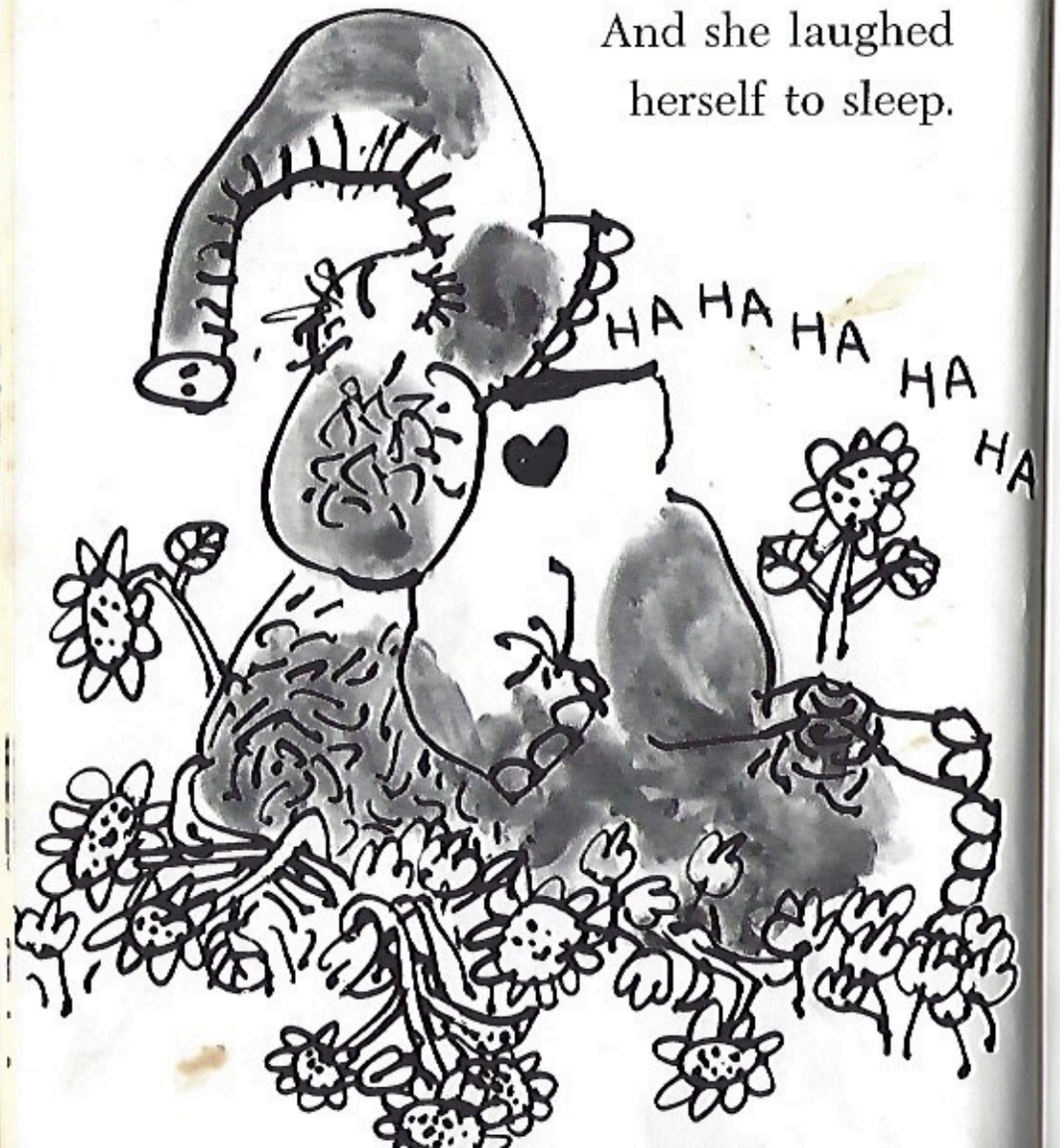


The hyenas gave two "Ha ha's" and stopped.
"That's not so funny," said Smiley.
"Listen to this:
Why can elephants travel a lot?"
"Can they really?" said Sally. "Why?"

"Because they carry their trunks with them," laughed Smiley.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
laughed the hyenas.
They laughed so much that Sally started laughing, too.

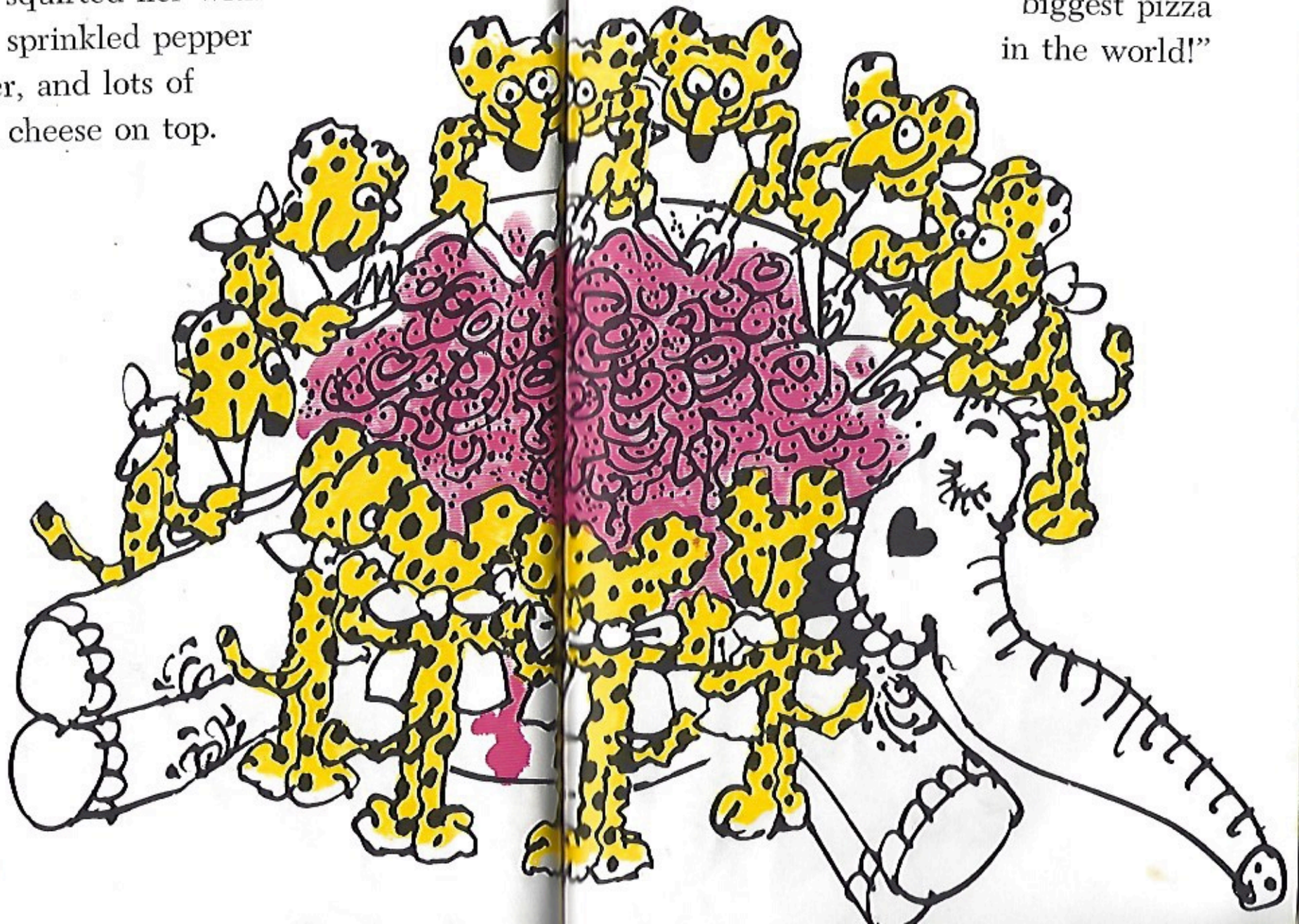


Wiping a tear from his eye,
Smiley said,
"Why does an elephant never forget?"
"I know that one," Sally answered.
"Because she has nothing to remember!"
And she laughed
herself to sleep.

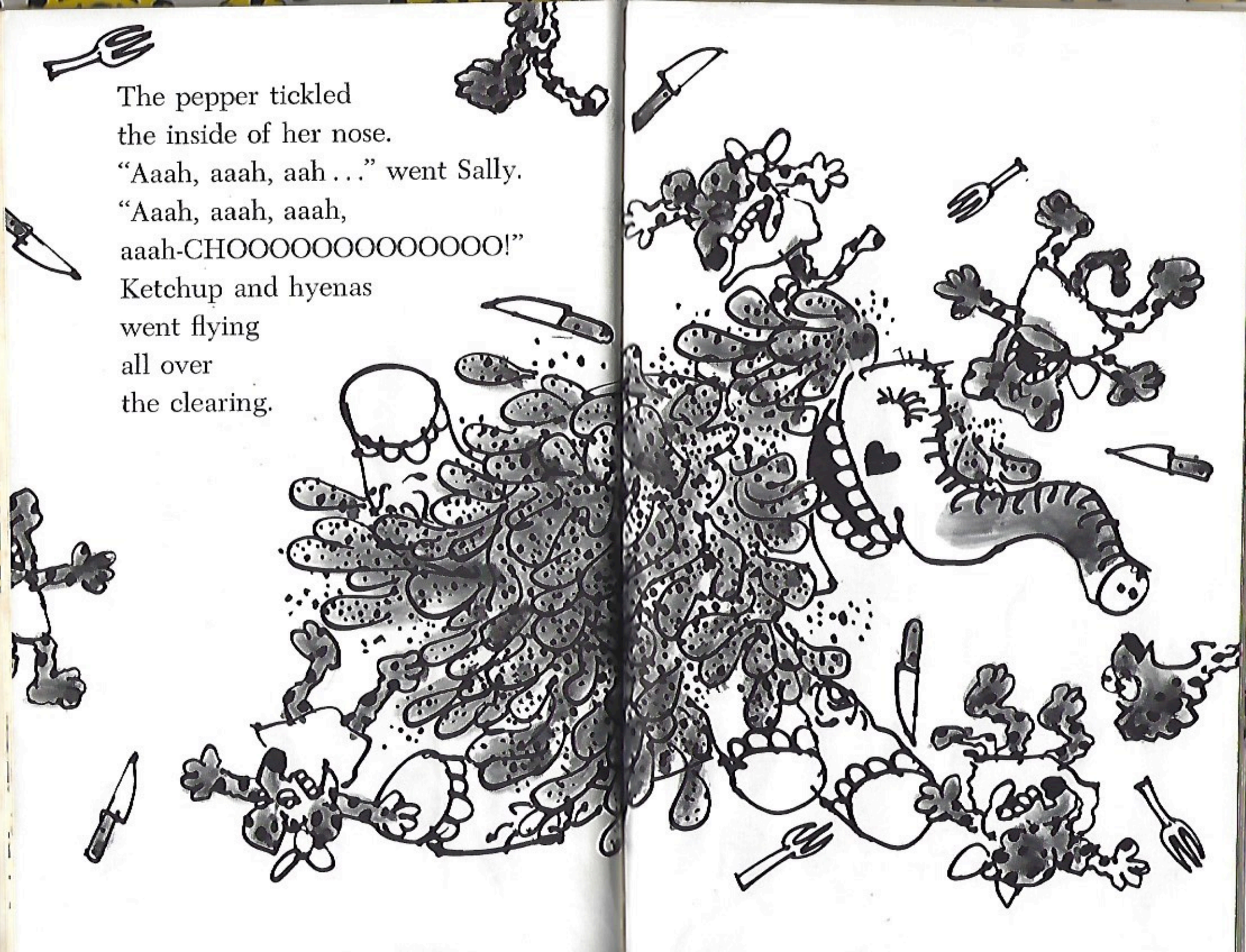


The hyenas quickly poured
ketchup over Sally.
They squirted her with olive oil.
They sprinkled pepper
on her, and lots of
pizza cheese on top.

"Boys," said Smiley,
"This elephant will make the
biggest pizza
in the world!"

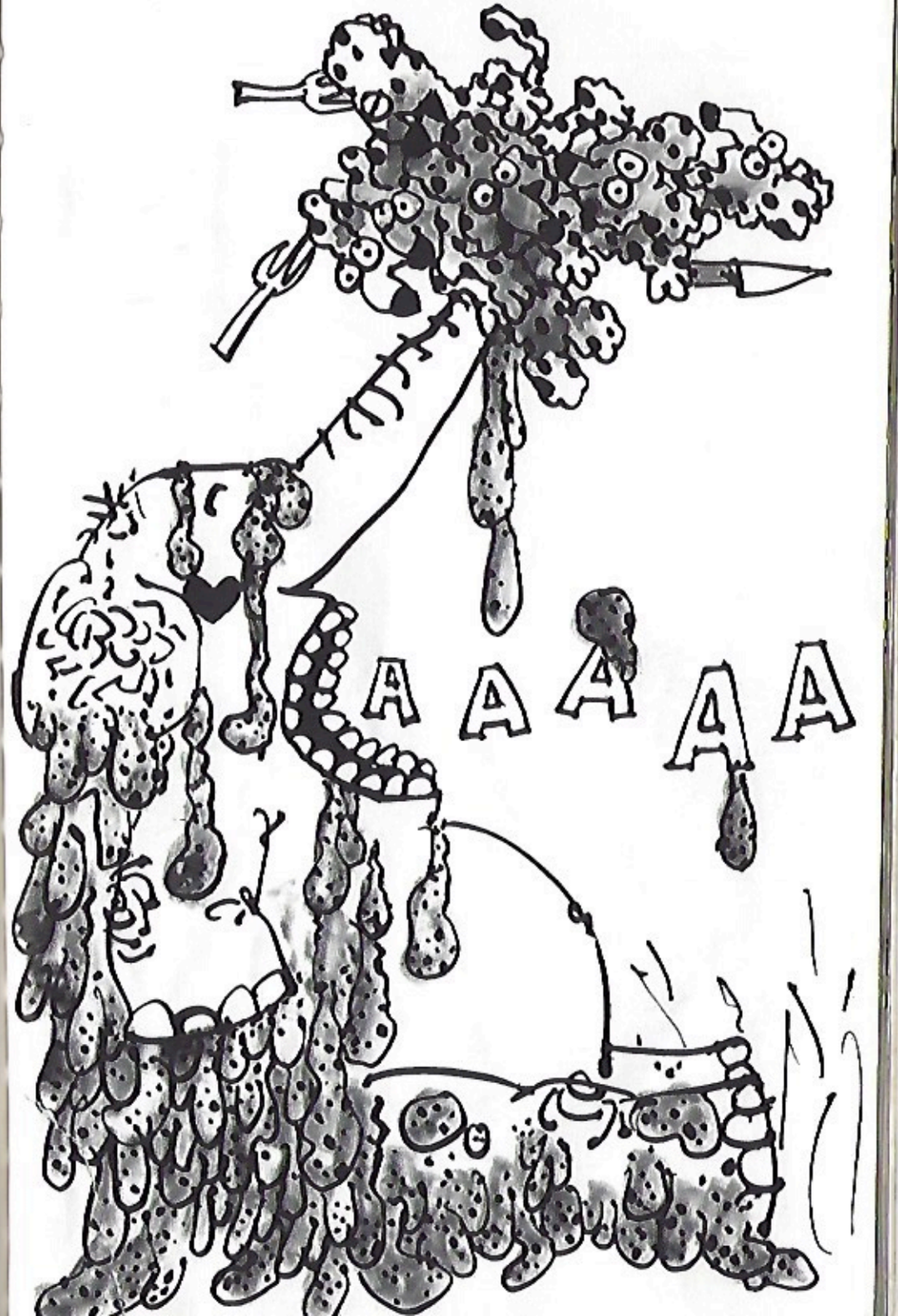


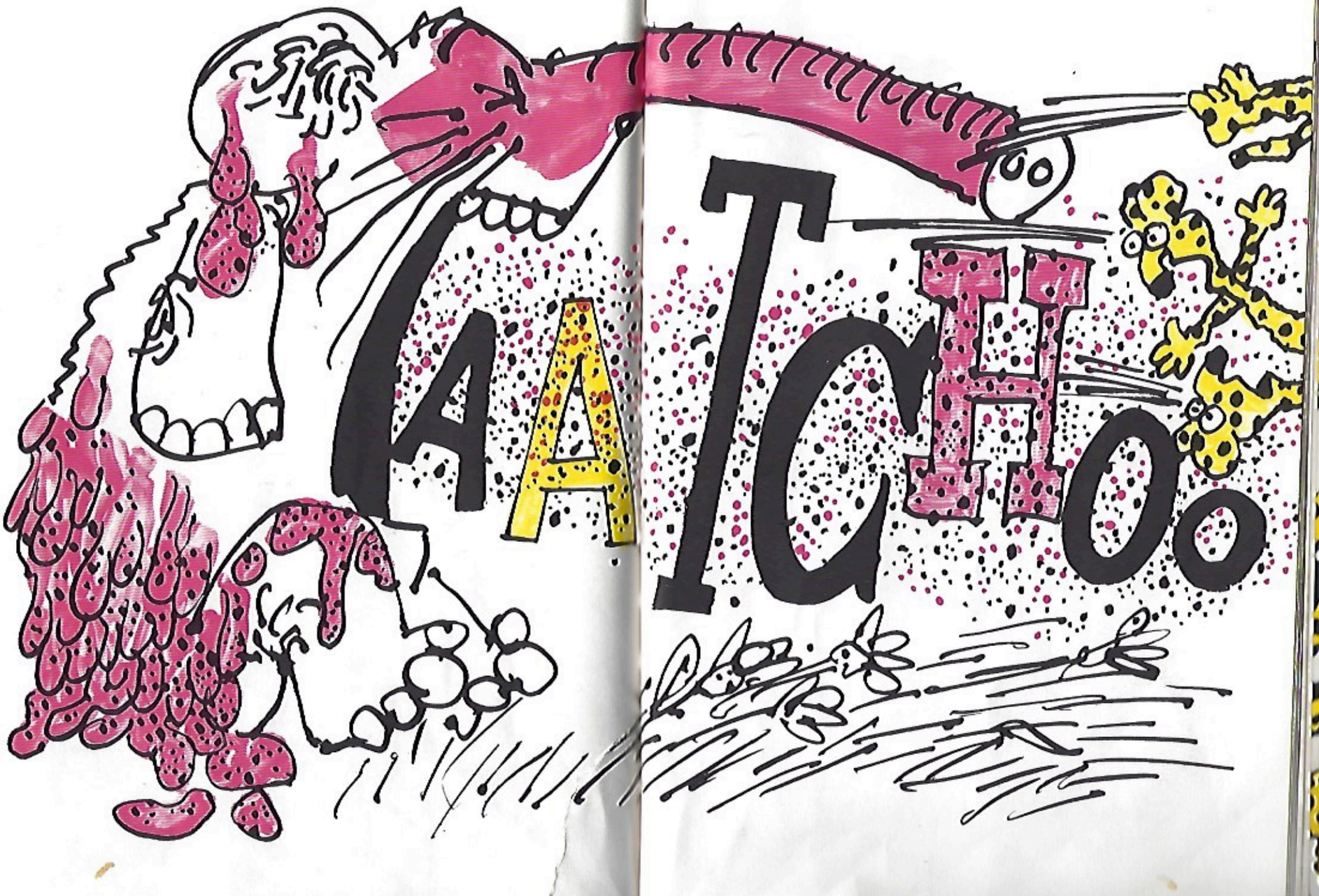
The pepper tickled
the inside of her nose.
"Aaah, aaah, aah . . ." went Sally.
"Aaah, aaah, aaah,
aaah-CHOOOOOOOOOOOO!"
Ketchup and hyenas
went flying
all over
the clearing.



This time the hyenas tied
Sally's trunk to a tree.
Then they lined up
side by side.
GRITZ, GRITZ, GRITZ,
went their knives.
They sawed back and forth
on her tough elephant hide.
GRITZ, GRITZ, GRITZ.
But the knives just tickled Sally,
and she smiled in her sleep.

Suddenly Sally's trunk snapped loose
and she started to sneeze again.
"Aaah, aaah, aaah . . ."
All the hyenas were sucked
to the end of her trunk.

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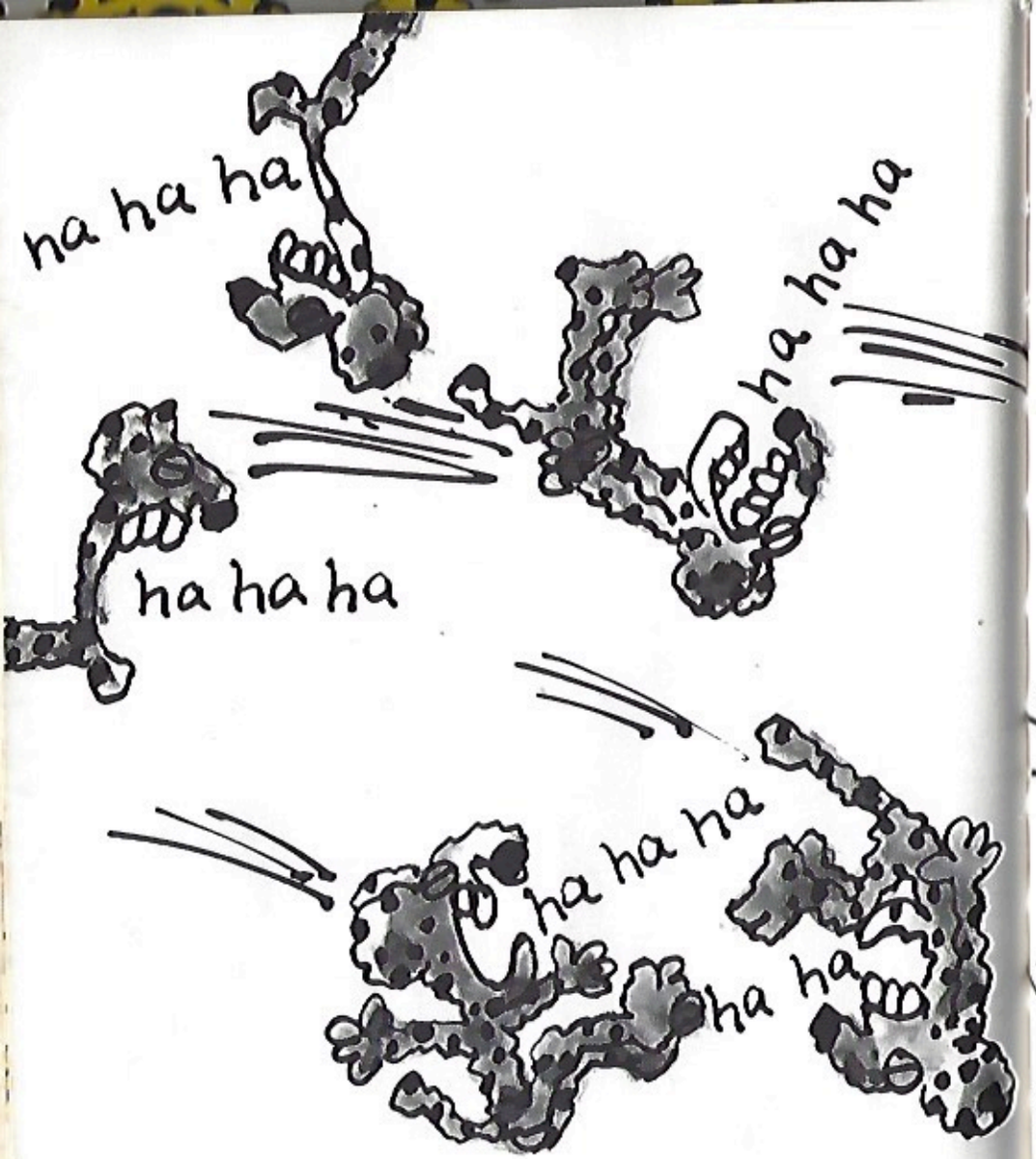
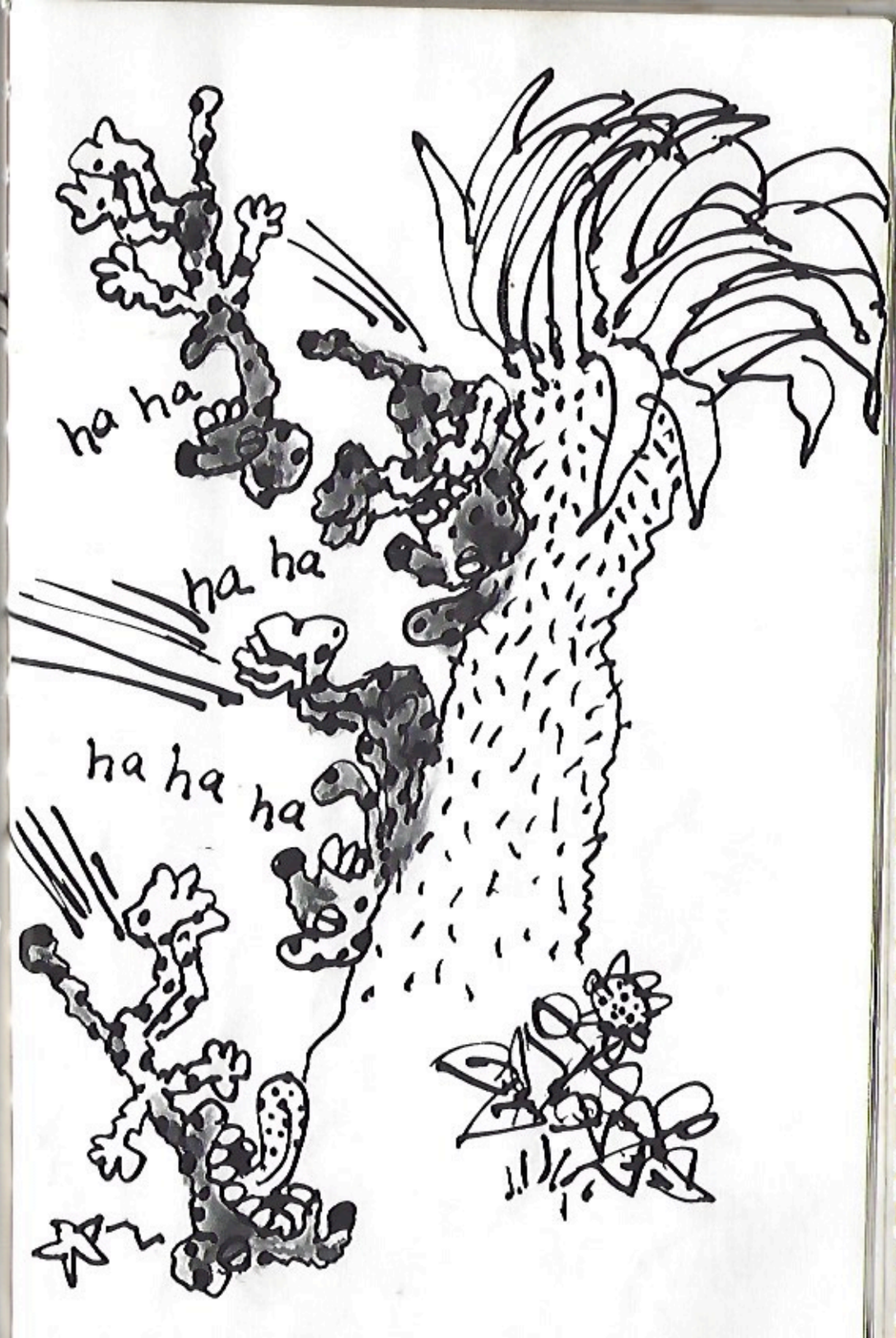
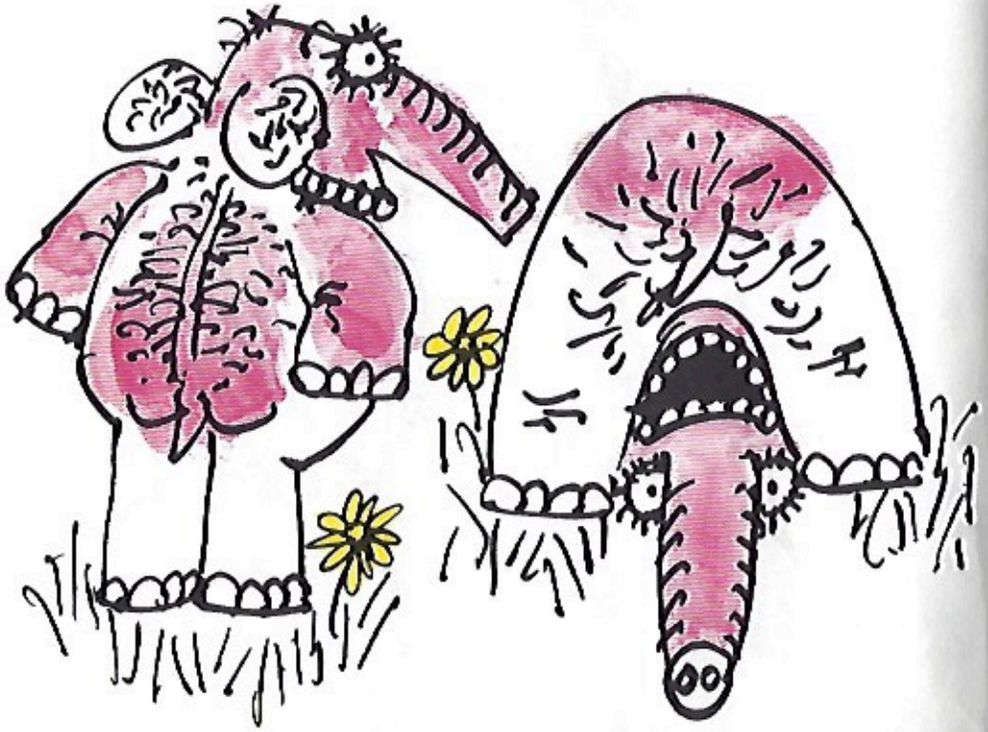
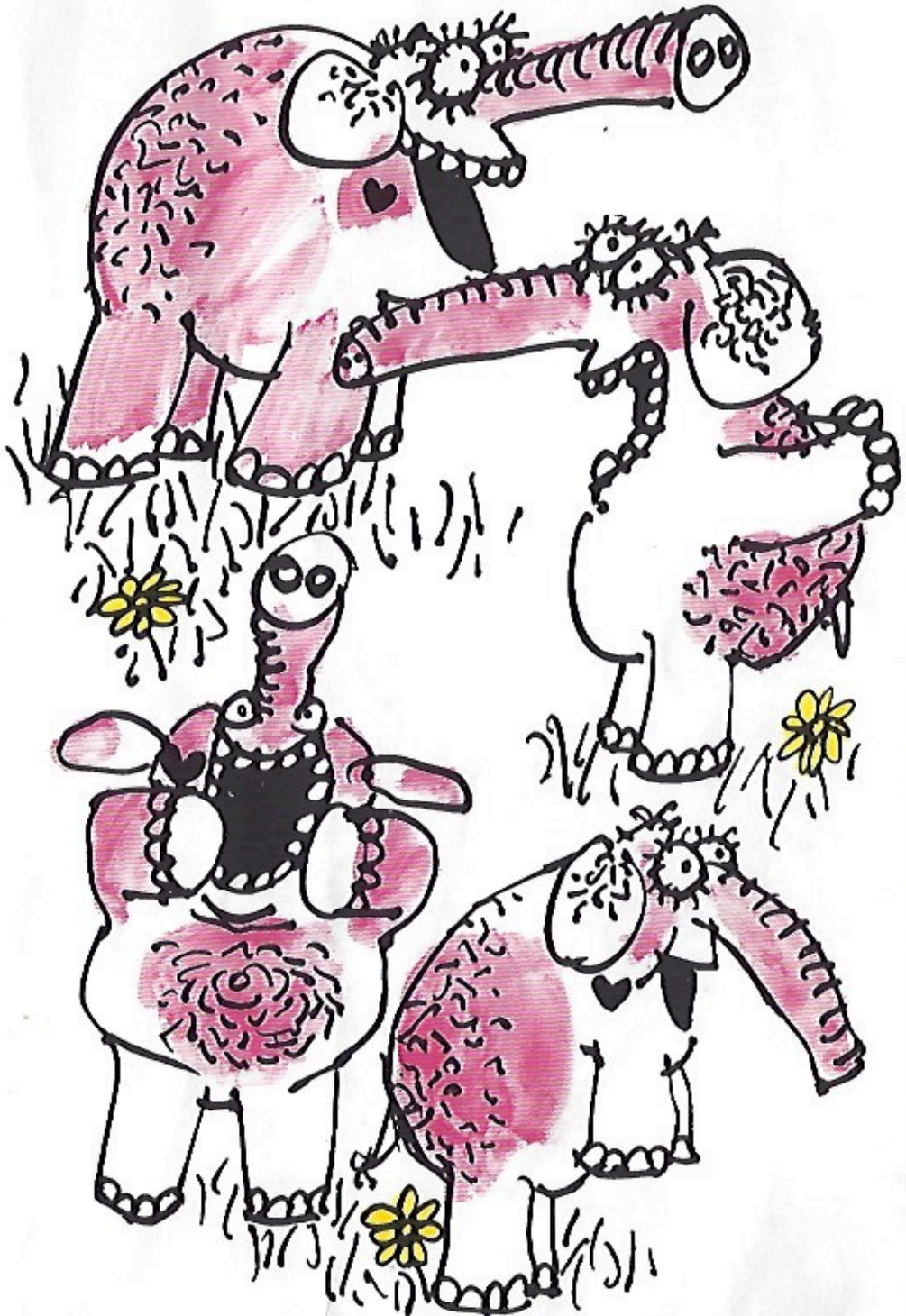


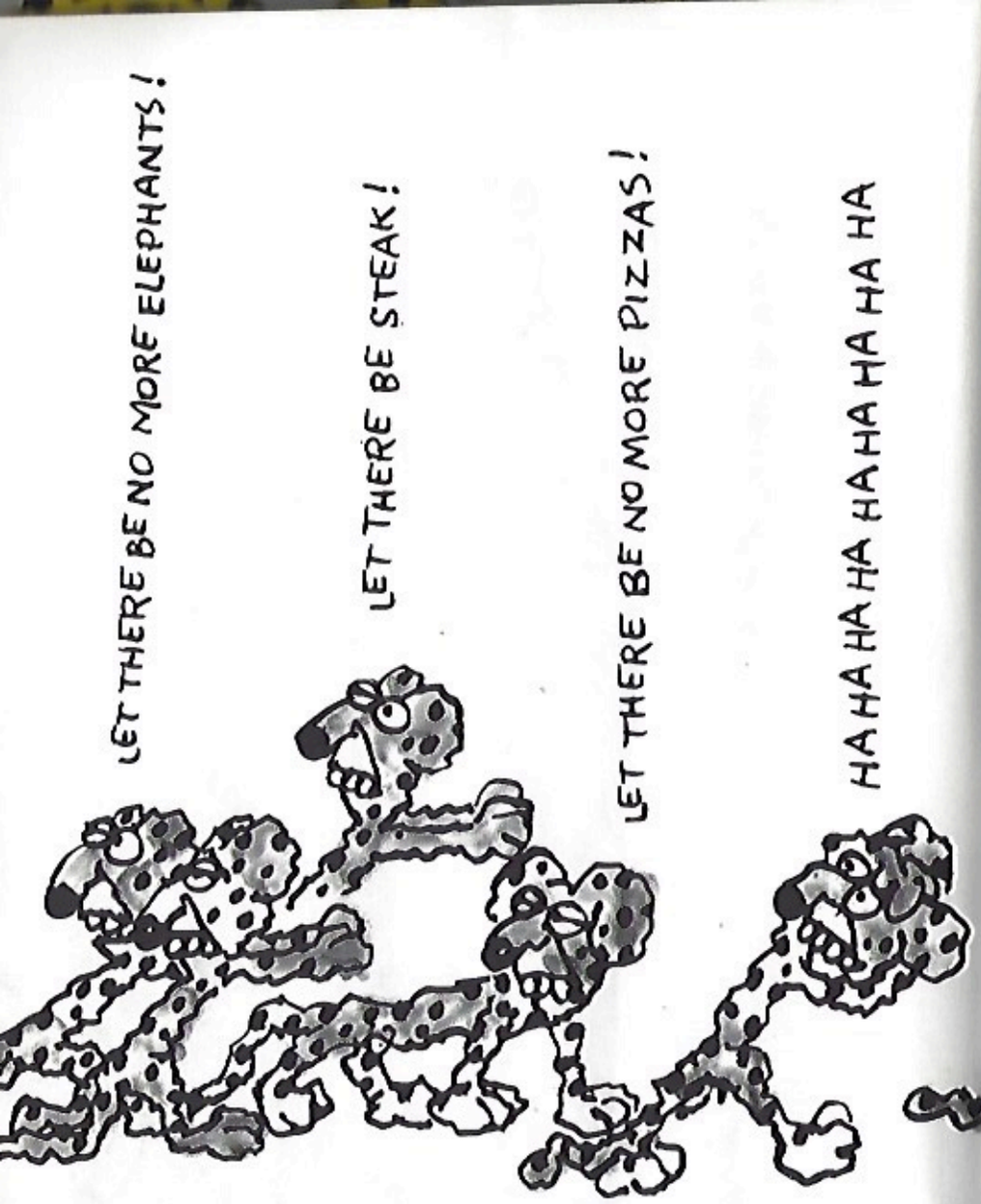
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA,
wailed the hyenas.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!



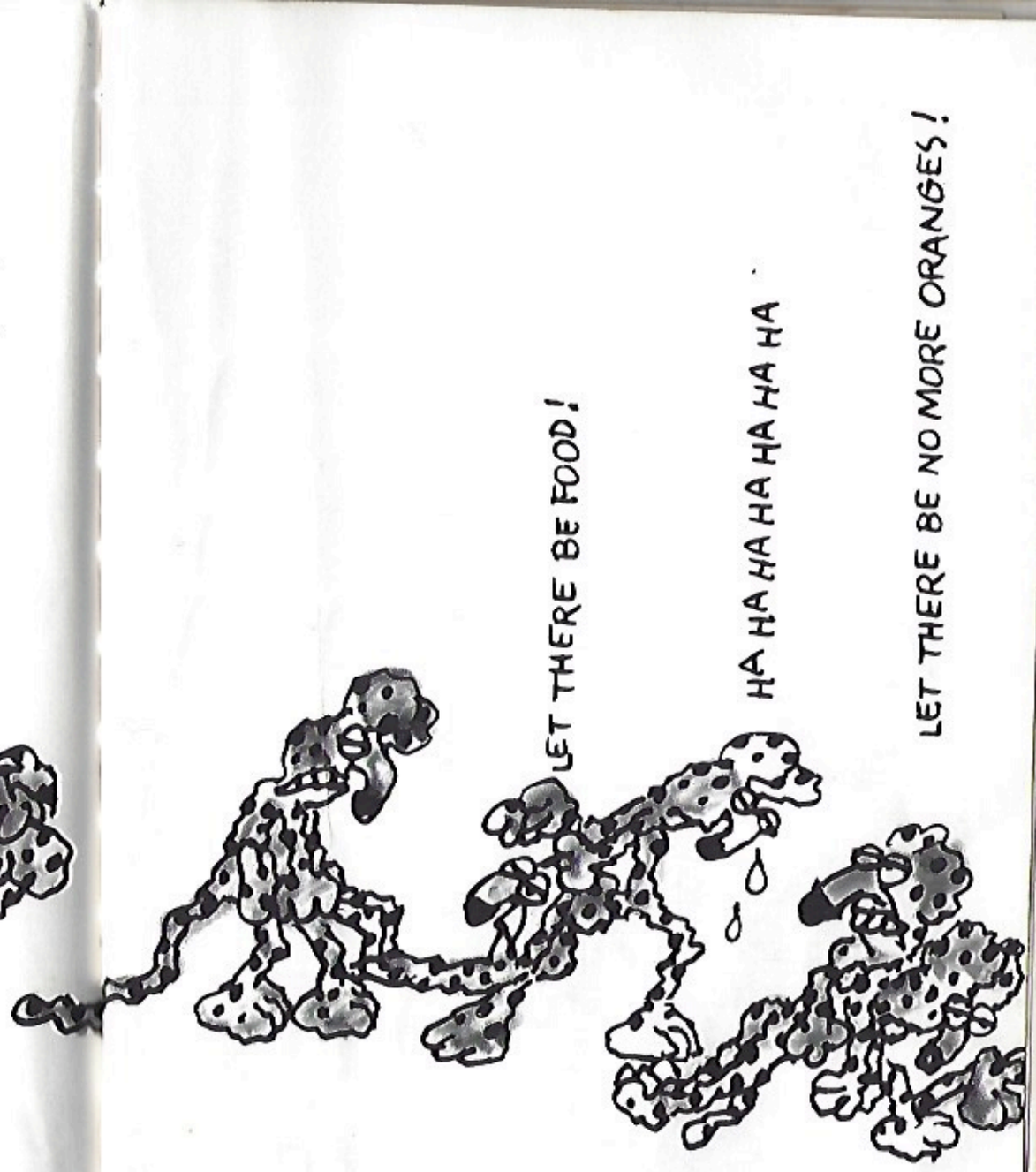
And they ran as far as they could
to get away from Sally.
"Yoo-hoo, boys!
It's me. Sally!
Where are you?
Are we playing hide-and-seek?
I didn't mean to sneeze like that!
Yoo-hoo, boys!
It's me! Sally!"





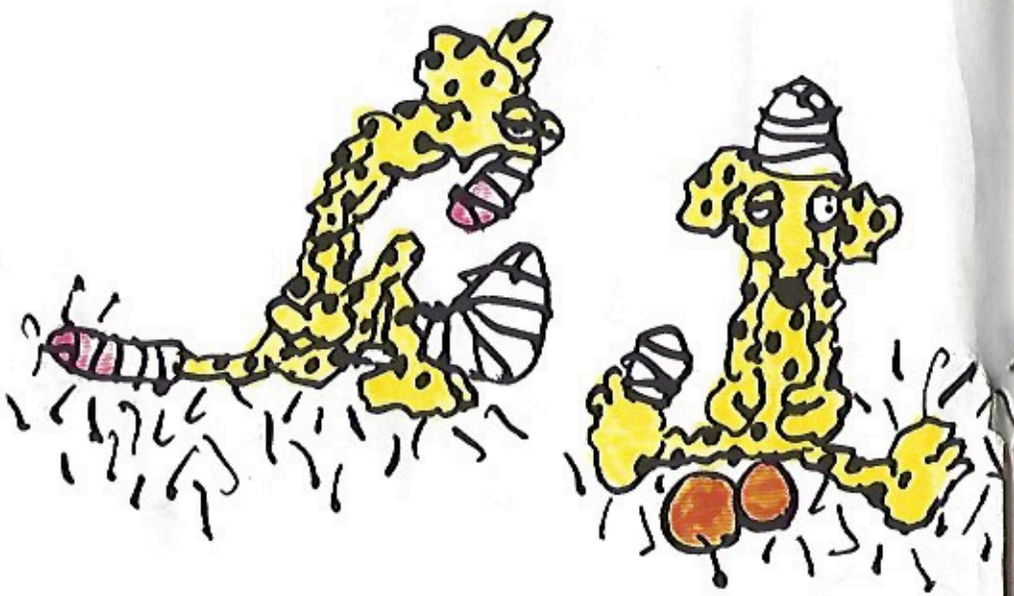


The hyenas could hear Sally
tramping around, calling "Yoo-hoo!"
They limped away
and hid in the jungle.



They didn't want
her to find them.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Smiley.
"Back to the orange grove.
That crazy Sally would have made
the biggest pizza — "
"HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!"
laughed the hyenas.
"The biggest pizza in the world!"



About the Author/Illustrator

A free-lance cartoonist, Lou Myers was born in Paris but grew up in New York City. He studied art in Paris and at the New School in New York City. His work has appeared in *Esquire, Paris-Match, Horizon, Evergreen Review,* and *Réalités.*

He has written two books for adults, *Group Therapy* and *A Psychiatric Glossary,* and another very funny children's book, *Tutti-Frutti.*

Mr. Myers lives in Peekskill, New York, with his wife and children.

"Lou Myers has a strong imagination that makes the most of some zany situations. Yes, his pictures are comic-book art, the best kind: concise, fresh, madly animated. . . . It is, after all, only a *style,* one that can be as expressive as any other in the hands of a real artist, such as Lou Myers."

— *Maurice Sendak*

(from a review in *Book World* of Lou Myers' first book for children, *Tutti-Frutti*)

A Break-of-Day Book
HA HA HA HYENAS
written and illustrated by Lou Myers
THE HEART OF THE WOOD
written by Victor Sharoff
illustrated by Wallace Tripp
TIGERS IN THE WOODS
written by Miriam Anne Bourne
illustrated by Wallace Tripp
THE TRUFFLE PIG
written by Claire Huchet Bishop
illustrated by Kurt Wiese